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## More college students are giving ROTC a chance

By Mary Beth Marklein,

On campuses throughout the USA, officials report a surge of interest since Sept. 11 in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, through which students can receive thousands of dollars in scholarships if they commit to serving in the military after graduation. At Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, Brian Davis, a junior criminal justice major, contracted with the U.S. Army to do four years of active duty upon graduation from college. Davis already had planned a military career, but says, "It's a lot more serious now, and there's some anxiety among my family." "I could have chosen the reserves, but I wanted to actively serve the Army," Davis says. At the University of Central Florida in Orlando, Lt. Col. John Ruzich, a professor of military science, says he has seen a marked increase in "walk-ins" interested in learning more about ROTC since the attacks. Same with California State University-Fullerton. "We had a lot of college students saying, 'I want to do something.

What can I do?' " says Capt. Michaelle Munger, ROTC enrollment adviser. But, she says, interest typically fades when they learn that training alone takes at least two years. "When they hear that, they're, like, 'Oh,' " Munger says. ROTC was created by Congress in 1916 to ensure that educated men were well represented in the military. Many campuses banished ROTC from their campuses in protest of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and in more recent years, the criticism has focused on the military's stance on homosexuals. The issue remains controversial. After Sept. 11, a debate flared at Harvard when a Harvard alumnus collected 900 signatures calling for ROTC's return. That led a student member of the Undergraduate Council to raise the issue in an e-mail, unleashing an informal, contentious discussion, according to the Harvard Crimson, a student paper. Campus and student government officials indicate that it's doubtful the policy will change. Harvard cadets may train in Army, Navy and Air Force ROTC programs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.